

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Appreciation is expressed to Examiner Ho for the indicated allowability of Claims 9-14 and the indication that Claims 4, 5, 7 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the subject matter recited in the respective independent claim and any intervening claims.

In light of the indicated allowability of Claims 9-14, the only independent claims currently at issue are Claims 1 and 15, both of which have been rejected based on the disclosure contained in U.S. Patent No. 6,167,779 to *Sano et al.* That rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

It is understood from the Official Action that a portion of the handle 2 disclosed in *Sano et al.* is said to correspond to the claimed grip-type outer handle recited in independent Claims 1 and 15. However, independent Claims 1 and 15 recite that the vehicle door handle device comprises a frame secured to the inside of the vehicle door outer panel and a grip-type outer handle mounted from outside the vehicle door outer panel. This is to be contrasted with the handle 2 disclosed in *Sano et al.* As specifically discussed at a number of places in *Sano et al.* (see, for example, the discussions in column 1, lines 7-8 and column 1, 21-23), the disclosed handle structure is an *inside handle unit*. Thus, the handle 2, including the portion which is said to correspond to the claimed grip-type outer handle, is mounted from

inside the vehicle door outer panel rather than from outside the vehicle door outer panel as claimed.

Considering at least this difference, it is respectfully submitted that the anticipatory rejection of independent Claims 1 and 15 based on the disclosure contained in *Sano et al.* is improper and should be withdrawn.

New dependent Claims 19 and 20 have been added to define additional distinguishing aspects associated with the claimed vehicle door handle. Claim 19 recites that the link has an input portion and the grip-type outer handle has an insertion projection engageable with the input portion of the link. Claim 19 also recites that the link is held in the preliminary holding position so that the insertion projection of the grip-type outer handle can engage the input portion of the link.

It is understood from the Official Action that a portion of the inside handle 2 disclosed in *Sano et al.* is interpreted to correspond to the claimed grip-type outer handle while another portion of the inside handle 2 is interpreted as corresponding to the claimed link. In other words, the portions of the inside door handle structure disclosed in *Sano et al.* which are said to correspond to the claimed link and the claimed grip-type outer handle are integrally formed as a part of the same handle. Thus, it cannot be said that *Sano et al.* discloses an input portion of a link and an insertion projection on a grip-type outer handle, with the insertion projection on the grip-type outer handle being engageable with the input portion of the link. Further, *Sano et al.* cannot be said to disclose that the portion of the inside door handle

structure disclosed in *Sano et al.* which is said to correspond to the claimed link is held in a preliminary holding position so that an insertion projection of a grip-type outer handle can engage an input portion of the link. It is thus submitted that new dependent Claim 19 is further distinguishable over the disclosure in *Sano et al.*

Claim 20 recites that the link is held in the preliminary holding position by engagement of the part of the frame with the part of the link so that the portion of the outer handle can engage the portion of the link. The Official Action states that the face plate 1a/protruded portion 10 disclosed in *Sano et al.* corresponds to the portion of the frame that engages the projected portion 9 to hold a link in a preliminary holding position. However, the engagement between the face plate 1a/protruded portion 10 and the projected portion 9 does not hold the "link" in a position so that the portion of the outer handle can engage the portion of the link as recited in dependent Claim 20. That is, considering that the portions of the inside door handle structure disclosed in *Sano et al.* which are said to correspond to the claimed link and the claimed grip-type outer handle are integrally formed as part of the same handle, it cannot be said that the link is held in a preliminary holding position so that the portion of the outer handle can engage the portion of the link. Thus, Claim 20 is allowable for these additional reasons.

As a final point, independent Claim 15 has been amended in a minor respect without regard the rejection based on *Sano et al.* and without narrowing the claim scope. These amendments simply involve changing the term "portion" as it pertains

to the frame and the link in the last clause of Claim 15 to --part--. The purpose for these changes was simply to avoid possible confusion with respect to the earlier recitation referring to the "portion" of the link.

For at least the reasons set forth above, it is submitted that all of the claims in this application are allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of record and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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